

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1766

Introduced by Assembly Member Nazarian

February 14, 2014

An act to add Section 16523 to the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to foster care.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1766, as introduced, Nazarian. Foster youth: transitional housing pilot project.

Existing law establishes the Aid to Families with Dependent Children-Foster Care (AFDC-FC) program, under which counties provide payments to foster care providers on behalf of qualified children in foster care. The program is funded by a combination of federal, state, and county funds, with moneys from the General Fund being continuously appropriated to pay for the state's share of AFDC-FC costs.

Existing law requires the State Department of Social Services to adopt regulations to govern county transitional housing placement programs that provide supervised housing services to persons at least 16 years of age and not more than 18 years of age, with specified exceptions, who satisfy the requirements of the AFDC-FC program, are in out-of-home placement, as specified, and are participating in, or have successfully completed, an independent living program. Existing law requires that in order for a facility to participate in a transitional housing placement program, the facility shall obtain certification from the county department of social services or county probation department that the facility satisfies certain criteria.

This bill would authorize the County of Los Angeles, in conjunction with the University of California at Los Angeles and a nonprofit child advocacy organization, to participate in a pilot project to establish the University-Affiliated First Star High School Academy, under the administration of the State Department of Social Services. The bill would require that the academy be licensed as a transitional housing placement provider, but would specify certain alternative requirements for the project including, among others, that the academy serve foster children who are attending high school and are at least 13 years of age. The bill would require the department to prepare a report evaluating the effectiveness of the pilot project and to submit it to the Legislature by January 1, 2020. The bill would make legislative findings and declarations as to the necessity of a special statute for the County of Los Angeles.

This bill would provide that the continuous appropriation for the state's share of the AFDC-DF costs would not be made for purposes of implementing the bill.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature find and declares all of the
- 2 following:
- 3 (a) Only 50 percent of foster youth graduate from high school.
- 4 (b) Only 3 percent of former foster youth graduate from a
- 5 four-year college, even though more than 70 percent express a
- 6 desire to earn a college degree.
- 7 (c) In Los Angeles County, 24 percent of former foster youth
- 8 will have experienced homelessness within two years of leaving
- 9 the foster care system.
- 10 (d) Approximately 60 percent of young women in foster care
- 11 will become pregnant by 20 years of age.
- 12 (e) Within two years of leaving the foster care system, 64 percent
- 13 of young men and 30 percent of young women are incarcerated.
- 14 (f) With approximately 5,200 youth aging out of foster care
- 15 every year in California, the cost to state and local governments
- 16 of homelessness, incarceration, and indigence of former foster
- 17 youth is \$165 million per year.

1 (g) The college environment has a holistic effect on students,
2 and impacts not only the academic but also the psychosocial aspects
3 of students' development.

4 (h) Large colleges and universities have specialists in the areas
5 of medicine, law, psychology, sociology, communication, and
6 education who can greatly augment the services provided to foster
7 youth by county child welfare agencies.

8 (i) The existing First Star UCLA Bruin Guardian Scholar
9 Summer Academy offers a summer program to foster youth, which
10 consists of daylong scheduled classes, programs, and activities
11 that provide two to four undergraduate academic credits each
12 summer session, as well as the social and emotional preparation
13 necessary to flourish in college and the skills necessary to gain
14 acceptance into college and successfully transition into adulthood.

15 (j) Extending the First Star UCLA Bruin Guardian Scholar
16 Summer Academy to a year-round placement option would allow
17 foster youth to fully realize the benefits of this college environment.

18 SEC. 2. Section 16523 is added to the Welfare and Institutions
19 Code, to read:

20 16523. (a) The department shall implement a pilot project in
21 the County of Los Angeles, at the option of the county, in
22 conjunction with the University of California at Los Angeles and
23 a nonprofit child advocacy organization, to establish the
24 University-Affiliated First Star High School Academy. The
25 academy shall be licensed as a transitional housing placement
26 provider pursuant to this article and Section 1559.110 of the Health
27 and Safety Code, but shall include all of the following components:

28 (1) The academy shall serve foster children who are attending
29 high school and are at least 13 years of age, but who do not exceed
30 the age limit specified in paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) of Section
31 16522.1.

32 (2) The academy shall be limited to a program described in
33 paragraph (1) of subdivision (d) of Section 16522, however,
34 residential facilities for participants and supervisory adults may
35 include configurations including, but not limited to, dormitory,
36 multioccupant, clustered, hub, and other housing layouts and
37 arrangements as are commonly found in a college or university
38 environment.

39 (3) The program staffing ratio of case manager to client shall
40 not exceed one to three.

1 (b) The academy shall be reimbursed at the monthly rate
2 specified in subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (a)
3 Section 11403.3.

4 (c) The department shall prepare a report evaluating the
5 effectiveness of the pilot project and shall submit the report to the
6 appropriate committees of the Legislature by January 1, 2020.

7 (1) This subdivision shall become inoperative on January 1,
8 2024, pursuant to Section 10231.5 of the Government Code.

9 (2) The report to be submitted pursuant to this subdivision shall
10 be submitted in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government
11 Code.

12 SEC. 3. No appropriation pursuant to Section 15200 of the
13 Welfare and Institutions Code shall be made for purposes of this
14 act.

15 SEC. 4. The Legislature finds and declares that a special law
16 is necessary and that a general law cannot be made applicable
17 within the meaning of Section 16 of Article IV of the California
18 Constitution because of the unique circumstances in the County
19 of Los Angeles with regard to the existing First Star UCLA Bruin
20 Guardian Scholar Summer Academy.